



YOU'RE NICKED

Investigating British television police series

with Senior Lecturer at Teesside University

Ben Lamb

ARC Stockton | Thur 8 Feb | 7pm



A Word from Dr. Ben Lamb

The police series is a genre of British television drama that has captivated audiences for over eighty years. Its exploration of the most distressing aspects of society has never failed to attract millions of viewers.



And yet throughout my lecturing career I have never been able to find a book that charts the genre's development from the 1950s until today. Largely because academics can be quite dismissive and snobbish towards popular TV

So that's why I sat down and wrote this 84,000 word piece. *You're Nicked: Investigating British television Police series*, is the first comprehensive history of British television's oldest and most successful TV drama genre. *You're Nicked* examines how the police series interacts with developments in the television industry, the British criminal justice system, the British police force, not to mention wider British society, culture, and criminology.

I've always been drawn to British police series because it's a fluid genre. Believe it or not the British police series is actually a genre without a clear-cut set of conventions. It is a genre that regularly borrows from soap opera, horror, sci-fi, action, westerns, and social realism.

So please do join me for a talk through my book where we will relive how British police series have developed over 8 decades with big screen clips and an interactive discussion.

Ben's investigation into British Police Drama

Dr. Ben Lamb's academic mission is to improve social integration policy through his research into representations of marginalised communities within the media, wider culture, and the arts.

Ben joined Teesside's Humanities Department in 2015. Previously, Ben has lectured in media theory at the University of East Anglia's School of Arts, Media, and American Studies and the University of South Wales' Faculty of Creative Industries.

After earning a first class BA in English and Film at Hull University, Ben was awarded an AHRC scholarship to study for a Film Studies MA at Warwick University.

Subsequently he was awarded a PhD scholarship on the AHRC funded 'Spaces of Television' project. His doctoral thesis 'The Construction of Fictional Spaces in British Television Drama and the Police Series of 1955-82', examined the developing aesthetics of the studio-based British television drama.

Focusing on the police series genre it examined how the studio production system was able to creatively intervene in sociological issues surrounding gender, class and crime.

Ben, do you have a moment to assist us with our enquiries?

Ahead of Ben bringing the event to ARC we had a chance to catch up with him, and ask some questions about what people can expect from the event.

1. In brief, what is your event You're Nicked: Investigating British TV Police Series about ?

A walk down memory lane comprising of nothing other than the most popular television drama genre to hit our television screens. In only one and a half hours we will race through 80 years of television from Dixon of Dock Green to Line of Duty with cinematically projected clips of the most exhilarating television ever made from each decade. Not to mention some insightful behind-the-scenes stories and gossip surrounding each production, told here for the first time.

2. Why should people come to your event at ARC ?

Even if you're the first ever human to have never enjoyed British television crime drama you will still be stimulated by the history, enamoured by some of the best car chase sequences, inspired by the bravery of real and fictional police alike, and amused by plenty of laugh-out-loud moments to discuss too.

3. How long have you been investigating British police television series in your work ?

10 years. There is A LOT of television to get through, believe you me. Not that I'm complaining!

4. From the crime shows you have mentioned, what would you say would be a highlight/favourite show of yours?

My favourite decade for police series would have to be the 1990s. Rising dissatisfaction with violent crime rates escalating year on year since the mid-1970s resulted in some of the most terrifying yet gripping dramas on our screens. Cracker is a personal favourite of mine for really pushing boundaries.

However, I do have a soft spot for The Cops. It feels only yesterday that the programme's signature handheld Jason Bourne-style shaky cameras dragged the British police procedural kicking and screaming into the twenty-first century – starkly daring to suggest, as it did, that some coppers and detectives may well play fast and loose with the law. Despite running for three series and winning the BAFTA for best drama series in 1998 and in 1999 it has completely slipped from public consciousness. Do you remember it? Come to my screening to find out more!

Dr Ben Lamb's Top 5 British Police Dramas

- 1. Cracker (ITV 1993 - 1996)**
 - 2. The Cops (BBC 1998 - 2000)**
 - 3. Life on Mars (2006 -2007)**
 - 4. The Sweeney (ITV 1975 - 1978)**
 - 5. Line of Duty (BBC 2012 - 2021)**
- or**
- Happy Valley (BBC 2014 - 2023)**

Special Mention:

The Bill (ITV 1983 -2010)

***Best American police series:**

The Wire (2002 -2008)

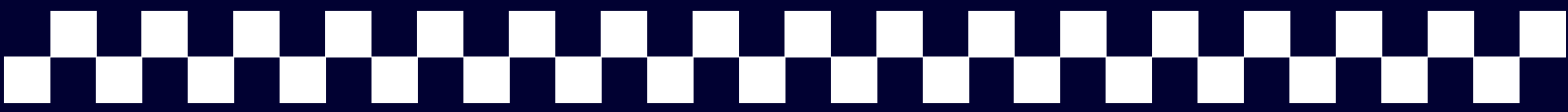
**My book on this series will be released in late
2024/early 2025 for Rowman & Littlefield's
Cultural History of Television book series.**

Book your tickets now!



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With wit, humour and insight, the author of the first dedicated study of one of British television's most popular genres conducts a forensic investigation of British television police series from 1955 to the present.

In just one hour Ben Lamb analyses the genre, ranging from Dixon of Dock Green to Happy Valley via The Sweeney, The Bill, and Cracker. He outlines how this home-grown genre has evolved and how different production technologies have affected its thematic development. He also looks at how police series have commented on criminological issues and intervened in sociological debates concerning class and gender identities.

His talk will appeal to scholars and students of British history, television, culture, sociology, and criminology. Mostly though, it will appeal to TV crime-drama addicts and enthusiasts the world over.

The event will include video clips of Police TV series past and present, discussing content and a Q&A with the audience.

Tickets and enquiries

01642 525199 | box.office@arconline.co.uk

ARC

Stockton Arts Centre

